

Tips for Safer Winter Gatherings and Holidays

Many of the traditional ways we celebrate winter holidays involve contact with non-household members in large group settings. This year, it is important to [plan early](#) and identify safer alternatives to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. The Department of Health is offering the following considerations to help protect individuals and communities.

General Considerations

Regardless of how you choose to celebrate the winter holidays, it is essential to keep the following in mind:

1. **[Wear a cloth face covering.](#)** Make sure the face-covering fits snugly over your nose and mouth.
2. **Avoid confined spaces.** Outdoor activities are safer than indoor activities. If participating in an outdoor event is not possible and choose to attend an indoor event, avoid crowded, poorly ventilated, and fully enclosed indoor spaces. Increase ventilation by opening windows and doors to the extent that it is safe and feasible based on the weather.
3. **Avoid close contact with people outside of your household.** Stay at least 6 feet away from all other people who are not part of your household.
4. **Wash or sanitize your hands often.** Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after being in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
5. **Stay home if you are sick or were recently exposed to someone with COVID-19.** If you are sick, have symptoms of COVID-19, or have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, stay home and away from others.

Recommended	Discouraged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest risk activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gatherings with members of your immediate household. ○ Decorate or drive around your neighborhood/town/city to look at holiday lights. ○ Write letters to Santa and deliver to the mailbox. ○ Virtual calls and pictures with Santa. ○ Mail holiday cards to loved ones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter holiday gatherings, events, or parties with non-household members violate the gathering limitations outlined in Governor Inslee's Safe Start Plan. Learn more about the gathering limits for each phase. • Caroling (singing) with large groups. • Close contact with people outside your household. For example, waiting in line to take a picture sitting on Santa's lap.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organize online holiday gatherings/contests (cookie decorating, gingerbread houses, etc.). ○ Host a virtual holiday movie watch party. ○ Online caroling. ○ Online shopping. ○ Holiday hikes. ○ Bake goods at home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower risk activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Door drop gift or treat deliveries with close friends/family. ○ Outdoor activities like snowball fights, sledding, snowshoeing. If done with members outside of your household, wear a mask, keep your distance, and keep it small. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work/school/faith-based/community-based holiday parties.
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More COVID-19 Information and Resources

Stay up-to-date on Washington's [current COVID-19 situation](#), [Governor Inslee's proclamations](#), [symptoms](#), [how it spreads](#), and [how and when people should get tested](#). See our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

A person's race/ethnicity or nationality does not, itself, put them at greater risk of COVID-19. However, data reveals that COVID-19 disproportionately impacts communities of color- this is due to the effects of racism, particularly structural racism, that leaves some groups with fewer opportunities to protect themselves and their communities. [Stigma will not help to fight the illness](#). Share accurate information with others to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

- [WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [WA State Coronavirus Response \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Find Your Local Health Department or District](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Stigma Reduction Resources](#)

Have more questions about COVID-19? Call our hotline: **1-800-525-0127**, Monday – Friday, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., Weekends: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For interpretative services, **press #** when they answer and **say your language**. For questions about your health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact a health care provider.

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 ([Washington Relay](#)) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.